DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 099 CE 033 249

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TITLE The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging (AoA). Case Study No. 4. Program Development Handbooks, A Comparison Case.
INSTITUTION American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Washington, DC. Gerontological Research Inst.
SPONS AGENCY Administration on Aging (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Sep 81
GRANT AoA-90-AR-2173
NOTE 37p.; For related documents see ED 218 489 and CE 033 250.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Aging (Individuals); Case Studies; Comparative Analysis; *Guides; *Information Dissemination; Material Development; Nursing Homes; Older Adults; Ombudsmen; *Program Development; Research; Research Projects; *Research Utilization; *Social Networks; Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS *Administration on Aging; Residential Remodeling

ABSTRACT

This case study, one in a series of research efforts designed to examine the utilization of the Administration on Aging's research, compares the use of two handbooks--one on nursing home ombudsman services for which high use resulted and one on residential repair and renovation for which low use resulted. An introduction describes the study that examined the generalizability of three propositions derived from the studies of successful utilization experiences to this case in which utilization was more limited. (The three propositions are that successful utilization follows the development of an informal social network, linking knowledge producers and knowledge users; interventions designed to boost utilization must occur throughout the life of a research project; and utilization depends on vigorous dissemination of project materials, not necessarily of its final report.) The second section summarizes the history and utilization experience of the comparison case, the Program Development Handbook Project. In the third section the fit between the propositions and the evidence from the comparison case are examined. These findings are discussed: no evidence was found that interventions differed appreciably from handbook to handbook, and the ombudsman services handbook had some advantages in regard to both networking and dissemination. (YLB)

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The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging (AoA)

CASE STUDY NO. 4

Program Development Handbooks, A Comparison Case

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September 1981

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PREFACE

This case study represents the fourth of several on the usefulness of AoA's research. The purpose of each case study is to show how and why the research was used in policymaking or practice. The case studies are part of the continuing work of the Gerontological Research Institute, which is supported under AoA award No. 90-AR-2173.

The present case study could not have been completed without the assistance of many persons at the federal, state, and local levels, who were interviewed between January and August 1981. (The list of interviewees may be found at the end of this report.) Especially helpful in this regard was Monica B. Holmes, the principal investigator of the Program Development Handbook Project. The authors are also grateful to James Steen of AoA for contributing his knowledge of the project history. All of the above assistance notwithstanding, the authors are responsible for the case study's findings and conclusions.

Interested readers may also want to refer to the full text or executive summaries (in separate volumes) of the first three case studies: Robert K. Yin and Ingrid Heinsohn, *The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging, Case Study No. 1: Transportation Services for the Elderly,* American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., 1980, Robert K. Yin and Ingrid Heinsohn, *The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging, Case Study No. 2: Older Americans Resources and Services (OARS),* American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., 1980, and Roberta C. Cronin and Ingrid Heinsohn, *The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging, Case Study No. 3: Volunteer Surveys of Nursing Homes,* American Institutes for Research, 1981.

CAPSULE SUMMARY

The Program Development Handbook Project produced a set of handbooks on seven of the priority service areas that are highlighted in the Older Americans Act. The handbooks were developed as part of the Administration on Aging's (AoA) efforts to provide technical assistance to state and area agencies on aging. These efforts were aimed at strengthening and expanding the capacity of state and area agencies to foster the effective delivery of specific services for older persons.

The development of the handbooks was supported by the research program at the Administration on Aging under a one-year contract in 1976-1977. The handbooks were printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office and distributed by AoA to all regional, state, and area aging offices throughout the country. The accompanying case study looks at the utilization of two of the handbooks—one on nursing home ombudsman services and the other on residential repair and renovation. The ombudsman handbook has been used extensively by state and area agencies on aging. Although comparable in quality, the residential repair handbook has hardly been used at all.

The experience of the Program Development Handbook Project is examined in the light of three propositions about the conditions for research utilization. These propositions emerged from three previous case studies (see *Case Study No. 1: Transportation Services for the Elderly, Case Study No. 2: Older Americans Resources and Services (OARS),* and *Case Study No. 3: Volunteer Surveys of Nursing Homes*). The findings from this case study suggest that two of the propositions are helpful in explaining the differences in use between the nursing home ombudsman and residential

repair and renovation handbooks: Successful utilization follows the development of an informal social network, linking knowledge producers (researchers) and knowledge users (consumers, service providers and policymakers). Utilization depends on the vigorous dissemination of project materials—but not necessarily of the final report. The ombudsman services handbook had some unique advantages over the home repair handbook with regard to both networking (Proposition No. 1) and dissemination (Proposition No. 2). It is particularly noteworthy that the ombudsman services handbook had: (a) a community of identifiable persons with a strong interest in the topic and a need to do something about it, and (b) staff within AoA to champion the product.

The third proposition—that "interventions" designed to boost utilization must occur throughout the life of a research project—contributed little to the understanding of the use of the handbooks. The development process of the handbooks did not differ appreciably in this regard.

A. INTRODUCTION

This case study is one of a series of research efforts designed to examine the utilization of AoA's research. Three prior case studies have focused on projects whose products were known to have been used extensively. The purpose of each was to show how and why the research was used in policymaking or practice. From these studies, a set of propositions emerged concerning the conditions under which such utilization is likely to occur. The present study is a comparison case. It examines the generalizability of the propositions derived from the studies of successful utilization experiences to a case in which utilization was more limited. The nature of the project, which involved the development of seven handbooks, also provided an opportunity to do a within-case comparison. We examined the utilization of two of the handbooks—one for which high use resulted and one for which low use resulted.

Three propositions from the previous case studies are examined in this report:

- First, successful utilization follows the development of an informal social network, linking knowledge producers (researchers) and knowledge users (consumers, service providers, and policymakers).
- Second, "interventions" designed to boost utilization must occur throughout the life of a

research project, and not merely at its completion.

- Third, utilization depends on the vigorous dissemination of project materials—but not necessarily of the final report. The focus of dissemination efforts may be a handbook, a manual, a questionnaire, or other products of the "'development" phase of R&D.[1]

In the next section, the history and utilization experience of our comparison case—the Program Development Handbook Project—is summarized. We use a question and answer format. The questions are directly relevant to the three propositions developed in our exemplary case studies. In the final section, we examine the fit between these propositions and the evidence from the comparison case.

[1]The aggregate implications from all of the case studies, together with a separate review of appropriate literature, have been used to assist AoA in increasing the utilization and dissemination of its sponsored research.

B. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOKS FOR STATE AND AREA AGENCIES

1. What was the project?

The Program Development Handbook project was designed to provide the staff of state and area agencies on aging with a basic core of "best practice" information about seven service areas. These seven areas included:

- homemaker and home health services,
- residential repair and renovation,
- employment services,
- legal services,
- nursing home ombudsman services,
- multipurpose senior centers, and
- information and referral.

In each of these areas, the purpose of the handbook was to assist state and area agencies with their responsibilities for developing services, giving technical assistance to providers, and monitoring the outcomes.

The project began in October 1976 with the award of a one-year contract by AoA to Community Research Applications, Inc. (CRA), a firm based in New York City. Dr. Monica B. Holmes served as the principal investigator. The award was for $257,828. Although the project was funded under Title IV-B (Research), a staff member from AoA's Office of State and Community Programs was assigned as project officer. At that time, the research division was understaffed, and it was assumed that program staff would be the eventual users of the handbook.

The project lasted one year, and culminated in the production of seven handbooks in October 1977:

Holmes, Douglas, and Monica B. Holmes, *Program Development Handbook for State and Area Agencies on Homemaker and Home Health Services for the Elderly,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026327)

Steinfeld, Edward, Monica B. Holmes, and Douglas Holmes, *Program Development Handbook for State and Area Agencies on Residential Repair and Renovation for the Elderly,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026332)

Moses, Stanley, Monica B. Holmes, and Douglas Holmes, *Program Development Handbook for State and Area Agencies on Employment Services for the Elderly,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026326)

Bigel, Madeline K., Monica B. Holmes, and Douglas Holmes, *Program Development for State and Area Agencies on Legal Services for the Elderly,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026329)

Steinbach, Leonard, Monica B. Holmes, and Douglas Holmes, *Program Development Handbook for State and Area Agencies on Nursing Home Ombudsman Services for the Elderly,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026331)

Holmes, Monica B., Martha Lang, and Douglas Holmes, *Program Development Handbook for State and Area Agencies on Multi-Purpose Senior Centers,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026330)

Abbott, Kathleen, Monica B. Holmes, and Douglas Holmes, *Program Development Handbook for State and Area Agencies on Information and Referral Services for the Elderly,* Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging, 1977. (NTIS No. HRP-0026328)

To develop each handbook, the CRA team reviewed the relevant literature; made site visits to two regional offices, three state agencies, and six area agencies; solicited advice from a panel of experts; and enlisted a task force of regional, state, and area representatives to serve as reviewers. AoA handled the printing and distribution of the handbooks, which took place early in 1978. AoA has sponsored no additional research or other activities related to the handbooks since that time.

2. What was the basis for initiating the research?

The idea for the handbook project originated at AoA. The project was conceived as one means of satisfying the agency's legislative mandate to provide technical assistance (TA) to state and area agencies on aging.[2]

The demands on AoA to provide TA had been growing since the passage of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1973, which established the overall objective of strengthening or building coordinated, comprehensive services for older persons at the area (or "substate") level. The 1973 legislation called for the creation of a "national network on aging" encompassing federal, regional, state, and local components. A further development came with the Amendments of 1975, which, among other things, identified four "national priority services" (transportation, home services, legal and other counseling services, and residential repair and renovation). Each state was required to allocate some minimum percentage of its Title III funds to these services. These amendments also incorporated the nursing home ombudsman program as a priority under the Model Projects program (Section 308), and placed emphasis elsewhere on nutrition, information and referral, multipurpose senior centers, and employment services.

[2]The Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 202(a)b.

Meanwhile, within AoA, efforts were underway to develop a model TA strategy that could support the various legislative priorities. The emerging plan was heavily influenced by AoA's favorable experiences with a research project on transportation.[3] The plan contained multiple components including state-of-the-art assessments, handbooks, and training. While agreement was lacking within the agency about the merit of all the components, a consensus emerged that the handbooks should be developed with Title IV-B funds.[4] Seven of the priority service areas in the Older Americans Act were identified as candidate topics for handbooks.[5]

This decision culminated in a Request for Proposal (RFP), prepared by AoA and released in July 1976. The RFP asked the contractor to "provide a basic component of . . . [AoA's] . . . technical assistance program, namely a handbook with sections that will summarize available knowledge and highlight model programs for strengthening and developing [seven] priority services."[6] The final product was to have an introduction that discussed the role of state and area agencies in providing services and the use of the handbook, and seven self-contained sections on the individual services. Each of these sections was to follow the same sequence of topics—methods of service provision, target population, sources of TA, resources, and bibliographic materials. The handbook was to be suitable for binding in a looseleaf notebook, and was to be provided to AoA in reproducible form. (Later, the single handbook notion was dropped in favor of separate handbooks with identical prefaces.)

Beyond stating the broad topics that each section should address and the purpose of the overall effort, the RFP left

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[3]For an overview of those experiences, see Robert K. Yin and Ingrid Heinsohn, *The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging, Case Study No. 1: Transportation Services for the Elderly*, American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., September 1980.

[4]Telephone interview with Byron Gold, Administration on Aging, Washington, D.C., May 10, 1981.

[5]Transportation services and nutrition services were exempted, because they had already received individual attention in other published material.

[6]RFP No. 105-76-3122, *Technical Assistance to the National Network on Aging: Handbooks on Priority Services for Older Persons*, July 26, 1976, p. 2.

the substance of the handbooks to the contractor. However, the RFP was quite specific about the process to be followed in developing the handbook over the 12 months allotted. It defined in considerable detail the requirements for site visits, expert contributions, advisory panels, and various stages of review. The process was to be identical for each of the seven services.

3. To what extent was the research used? When and how?

To probe the utilization of the seven handbooks, AIR staff initially interviewed the principal investigator, the AoA project officer, and other AoA staff (and former staff) who were familiar with the handbook project. None of the respondents was able to name specific users of the handbooks, but several offered guesses as to which handbooks had been most used overall.

Taken together, the results of these interviews suggested that two handbooks in particular—one on nursing home ombudsman services and the other on legal services—were likely to have been used the most. Several reasons were cited:

- The topics of the handbooks were of high priority, as evidenced by special staff support at the national level, within AoA.
- Most state agencies had staff specifically responsible for ombudsman and legal services programming. In contrast, many agencies did not have designated staff for the other service areas.
- The research team had made presentations about these two handbooks and had disseminated advance copies at national conferences of prospective users.

In the absence of any solid evidence about use of any of the handbooks at the state and local levels (and to conserve resources), we decided to select only two handbooks for further exploration—one for which high use was expected and one for which low use was expected. If these differential expectations proved to be correct, we intended to explore the reasons for the differences in use. Because differences

in use could be a function of differences in the quality of the product, however, we purposely selected two handbooks that had received high ratings on quality from our initial interviewees.[7] These were the handbook for *nursing home ombudsman services*, which was expected to have had high rates of utilization, and the handbook for *residential repair and renovation*, which was expected to have had low rates of utilization.

To explore the utilization of these handbooks, we interviewed representatives of numerous state and area agencies, as well as some direct service providers and former task force members.[8] Our sample consisted of persons or agencies that had been suggested as the most probable users—e.g., offices thought to be active or interested in the relevant service areas.[9] Scientific sampling was not necessary since the extent of utilization was not the primary interest.

The state and local interviews bore out our initial expectations. It was easy to locate users of the handbook for nursing home ombudsman services. In contrast, users of the residential repair handbook were hard to find, although several of the interviewees were aware that the handbook existed.

The responses from state and local interviewees are discussed below.

The Handbook for Nursing Home Ombudsman Services

The handbook on ombudsman services was used by both state units and area agencies on aging (SUAs and AAAs), as well as by other agencies that are direct providers of services to the elderly. The two direct providers we interviewed were providing ombudsman services under contract, in one instance for a state unit and in another for an area agency. The following vignettes illustrate the uses made of the handbook at various levels.

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[7]Other condtions that might explain utilization differences—dissimilar processes of development, funding levels, or project durations—were not relevant in this case. All of the handbooks had a similar history up until the final phases.

[8]The interviews were conducted by telephone in Spring 1981. A list of all interviewees appears at the end of this report.

[9]Suggestions came from AoA staff, the National Association of State Units on Aging, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, as well as from interviewees at the state and area agencies themselves

Vignette #1

The former state ombudsman in Tennessee began to develop a comprehensive state-level ombudsman program when he joined the Commission on Aging in 1978. In the process of assembling materials on ombudsman services, he obtained a copy of the ombudsman handbook from an area agency, which had received the entire set of handbooks from AoA. The former ombudsman used the handbook to develop substate or area programs. He found the section on program components especially useful in this regard.

The handbook is made available to new staff members because it is considered to provide a good basic orientation to ombudsman services. The former ombudsman prefers to use these handbooks rather than others because he feels that they were developed under contract to AoA, and therefore carry AoA's "stamp of approval."[10]

Vignette #2

The Pennsylvania State Department on Aging recently used the ombudsman handbook to develop a technical assistance bulletin and a training manual for the AAAs. The handbook is relevant and very timely for Pennsylvania, because the ombudsman program is just now being established statewide. Federal guidelines require that the state office spend one percent of its Title III-B funds on an ombudsman program. The state office has chosen to implement the program through the AAA's in the same fashion, by requiring them to allocate one percent of their Title III-B funds for local ombudsman programs.[11]

Vignette #3

The ombudsman services handbook is used routinely by the staff of the ombudsman program at the Montgomery County, Maryland AAA. The handbook serves as a reference for students and for interns assigned to the AAA, and selected materials also are used for training the program's volunteers. Volunteers currently number about 20. A staff member noted that the program would like a second copy of the handbook, but has been told that the materials are now out-of-print.[12]

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[10]Telephone interview with Ken Floyd, Tennessee Commission on Aging, Nashville, Tennessee, February 2, 1981.

[11]Telephone interview with Dan McGuire, Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 6, 1981.

[12]Telephone interview with Tin Tran, Montgomery County Area Agency on Aging, Rockville, Maryland, April 8, 1981.

Vignette #4

In December 1979, MAC Inc., one of Maryland's AAAs, hired a new staff member to develop its ombudsman services. The new ombudsman director discovered a copy of the relevant handbook at the agency, and has relied on it a great deal in carrying out her tasks. She used the contents to educate herself as well as others about pertinent legislation, the agencies involved in nursing home matters, and the range of different program alternatives. The ombudsman continues to use the handbook as a resource in training volunteers.[13]

Vignette #5

The Nursing Home Ombudsman Office in Helena, Montana provides ombudsman services under an advocacy assistance grant from the State Social and Rehabilitation Services. A staff member who was temporarily serving as the ombudsman reported that she had not used the handbook herself but she did have a copy. The handbook showed signs of use by the previous ombudsman, as it contained many notes and pages marked with paper clips. Sections that appeared to have been used most frequently include the Medicare/Medicaid form and regulations, the section on the complaint investigation process and related forms, and a section on what to consider when looking for a nursing home.[14]

Vignette #6

The Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency, which provides ombudsman services under contract to the Nashville, Tennessee AAA, used the ombudsman handbook to develop a procedure manual for the 12-county rural area it serves. The agency borrowed the handbook from the AAA shortly after its ombudsman contract was awarded; because the loan was short-term, the assistant director for aging services wrote to AoA for another copy. In response, AoA sent the entire set of handbooks. As a result, the agency also used several of the other handbooks, including those on home health care and information and referral. The assistant director pointed out that the handbooks, although labelled for state and area agencies, were "really needed at this level--we are the service providers."[15]

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[13]Telephone interview with Mary Lou Mooney, MAC, Inc., Salisbury, Maryland, April 8, 1981.

[14]Telephone interview with Ruth Mizer-Welch, Montana Aging Services Bureau, Helena, Montana, February 26, 1981.

[15]Telephone interview with Blanche Grizell, Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency, Nashville, Tennessee, April 8, 1981.

Vignette #7

> The Advocacy Assistance Unit of the California Department of Aging has used the ombudsman handbook for training purposes. The unit initially received a copy of the handbook from the AoA Nursing Home Interests staff[16] in November 1977. The Nursing Interests staff disseminated a photocopy of the handbook (except for the appendices) to a variety of persons across the country, including state ombudsman development specialists and ombudsman liaison staff members, before final printing of the handbook by GPO was completed. The staff's intent was to familiarize ombudsmen with the material in preparation for a national training conference to be held in early 1978.[17]

Several of the users in these vignettes indicated that a copy of the handbook was already available at the agency when they assumed their ombudsman duties. Although verification would be difficult, we assume that most agencies acquired their handbooks as a result of the general mailing by AoA in Spring 1978. However, the vignettes illustrate three exceptions to this general procedure:

- One state agency borrowed its handbook from an area agency.
- A contractor to an area agency first borrowed a copy from the area agency, then obtained a copy directly from AoA.
- One state agency obtained a pre-publication copy from AoA's Nursing Home Interests staff.

The handbooks have been used to plan and develop ombudsman programs and to train staff and volunteers. On a continuing basis, the handbooks also provide a handy reference for staff, and a convenient orientation tool for those unfamiliar with nursing home ombudsman services.

The Handbook for Residential Repair and Renovation

The utilization picture for the residential repair handbook is quite different. Numerous telephone calls to state and

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[16]Now the Advocacy Assistance Unit, Office of Program Development.

[17]Telephone interview with Rose Miyahara, California Department of Aging, Sacramento, California, February 27, 1981.

local agencies uncovered only two reports of use, both of them at the area agency level.

Vignette #8

> The Director of the Triangle J, North Carolina AAA, formerly a member of the project's advisory task force, reported that the residential repair handbook had been used by at least two local organizations responsible for developing and managing home repair programs. (Because of personnel turnover at these organizations, specific information about the type of utilization was not available.) Both organizations are AAA contractors. The AAA holds regular meetings for its contractors, and the meetings in part serve as a vehicle to keep the organizations abreast of new resources like the project handbooks.[18]

Vignette #9

> The Lancaster, Pennsylvania Office of Aging has reviewed and used the residential repair handbook, although the Director could not cite specific examples. The handbook also was shared with the AAA's subcontractors.[19]

Reasons for Non-Use

In collecting information about instances of utilization, we also noted the explanations offered by interviewees for failure to make use of either handbook. (Brief vignettes of "non-use" appear in Appendix A.) Because our sample of interviewees was not designed to be representative, no broad generalizations are warranted from these examples of non-use. However, two observations should be made.

First, a number of the non-users were simply unaware that the handbooks existed. In some cases, it appears that the respondents were involved in providing the relevant service and might well have made use of the handbook at some point, had it been available to them. (Some asked where the handbooks could be obtained.) Second, a number of other non-users indicated that they had no need for the handbook in question, because their agency had no involvement in the service. Local priorities vary.

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[18]Telephone interview with David Moser, Triangle J Council of Governments, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, April 10, 1981.

[19]Telephone interview with Peter Dys, Lancaster County Office of Aging, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April 23, 1981.

4. What evidence is there that bears on Proposition 1? Was there a social network linking knowledge producers (researchers) and knowledge users (consumers, service providers, and policymakers)?

During the year that the handbooks were being developed, there were numerous interactions between the CRA research team and prospective users. By and large, this networking with future audiences for the products had been a requirement set down by AoA in its original RFP. As noted earlier, AoA had been unusually specific about the *process* of handbook development, and CRA adhered quite closely to these specifications in carrying out its work.

The networking activities included the following:

1. In the early stages of the project, the researchers made *site visits* to two DHEW (now DHHS) regional offices, three state units on aging, and six area agencies on aging. At each site, the CRA team interviewed the director and various staff concerning their roles vis-a-vis each of the service areas and asked what the agency's staff might want or need from a set of handbooks. They also interviewed local service providers in the seven categories to be covered.

2. For each handbook, the research team—assisted by AoA's project officer—recruited a team of four to five *experts* to help prepare the outline and to review draft materials. The composition of these expert teams varied, but the total pool of experts included providers of the services, policymakers at federal, state, and local levels, researchers, and representatives of national associations. The expert team for the nursing home ombudsman handbook, for example, included the ombudsmen for the District of Columbia and the State of New Jersey, the former director of an ombudsman demonstration project, and a representative of Citizens for Better Care in Lansing, Michigan. The expert panel for residential repair and innovation included the director of the Association of Neighborhood Housing Developers, a member of Milwaukee, Wisconsin's Social Development Commission, and representatives of the Farmers Home Administration and a regional office of the Federal Energy Administration. Two-day meetings were held with each team of experts.

3. The project assembled a *task force* of advisors selected to represent the intended audience for the handbooks. The task force included the directors (or other representatives)

of two regional offices, five state units on aging, and five area agencies. The members also represented diverse parts of the country, rural and urban, and all four of the federally recognized minority groups. This task force reviewed the outline and first drafts of some of the materials from each handbook, and provided its comments at a three-day meeting with the research team. The members also reviewed later drafts and provided comments, but did not meet again as a group.

4. For each of the handbooks, the research team relied upon relevant members of *AoA's program staff*, as well as the project officer, to review the materials as they were being developed. The project officer attended the majority of the meetings with the experts and the task force; other AoA program staff attended project meetings concerning handbooks relevant to their own areas of expertise and responsibility.

5. In the case of the ombudsman handbooks, several persons from the *National Council of Senior Citizens and other organizations* were also called upon to provide advice on an *ad hoc* basis.

6. Finally, the CRA researchers discussed both the legal services and ombudsman service handbooks at *national AoA-sponsored conferences* of legal developers and ombudsmen specialists, respectively. The legal services conference occurred in Fall 1977 shortly before the end of CRA's contract, when the handbook was in near-final form. The ombudsman conference took place in January 1978, after completion of the contract but before GPO printing of the handbooks had been completed. The timing of the latter conference posed some difficulties. CRA could no longer expend project dollars because its contract had already expired, yet AoA had no funds available to support travel and lodging. In the end, rather than miss the opportunity to attend the conference, CRA paid the lead author's airfare to Washington D.C. and an AoA staff member offered the author lodging in her home.[20] Attendance at these two conferences was the only major form of interaction with users that had not been prescribed in AoA's RFP.

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[20]Telephone interview with Monica B. Holmes, Community Research Applications, Inc., New York, New York, January 16, 1981.

After the conclusion of their original contract, the CRA team had hoped for some continuing involvement in designing a training program to supplement the handbooks, in preparing updates of the materials, or perhaps in developing additional handbooks using the same process. None of these follow-on activities has been pursued by AoA, however, although AoA's program staff proposed specific training and TA that might be undertaken under various parts of the Title IV program. The CRA team has occasionally encountered handbook users during field contacts on other projects, but has had no role in the handbook effort since early 1978.[21]

5. What evidence is there that bears on Proposition 2? Were steps to promote utilization taken throughout the course of the project, rather than only at the end?

As the preceding discussion makes clear, user input and early networking were an integral part of the handbook development process. Modification of the products was an intended and inevitable byproduct. The principal investigator for CRA, the AoA project officer, and other observers or participants in the development of the handbooks all indicated considerable satisfaction with these aspects of the process.[22] A member of the advisory task force commented that this had been one of her most successful advisory board experiences, because the researchers had really listened to the practitioners and used their expertise.[23]

Aside from sharing early versions of the materials with the various advisory groups, the research team did little about "early" dissemination. This is not surprising, given

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[21]Following the AoA project, CRA did produce a similar handbook on day care services for the elderly, with the support of the Region II Office of DHEW. At one point, CRA estimated for AoA the cost of putting this handbook in the same format as the other seven and expanding its focus from a regional to a national one. Program staff recommended that funds be provided under the research or training budgets, but no follow-up action was taken by AoA.

[22]Interview with James Steen, Administration on Aging, Washington, D.C., February 3, 1981 and telephone interviews with Monica B. Holmes, January 16, 1981; Ed Steinfeld, State University of New York at Buffalo, New York, February 10, 1981; Howard White, Administration on Aging, Washington, D.C., January 21, 1981; and David Moser, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, April 10, 1981.

[23]Telephone interview with Jacqueline Nowak, Department of Aging, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 10, 1981.

that the project lasted only one year and that AoA itself planned to print and disseminate the completed handbooks. There were two exceptions; they occurred with the handbooks for nursing home ombudsman services and for legal services.

In the case of the handbook on ombudsman services, prepublication copies were disseminated widely. At the initiative of the Acting Director of AoA's Nursing Home Interests staff, photocopies of the entire handbook (except the appendices) were mailed in November 1977 to directors of state units on aging, to ombudsman liaison staff members in all regions, and to state ombudsman development specialists. An accompanying distribution memorandum explained that the Nursing Home Interests staff wanted to give the ombudsmen an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the material prior to their January training conference in Washington, D.C. In the case of the legal services handbook, the CRA team distributed drafts of the final version as part of their presentation to the conference of legal service developers.

Neither of these instances of "early" dissemination resulted in modification of the products, because they occurred too late for the CRA team to incorporate any feedback.

6. What evidence is there that bears on Proposition 3? Was there vigorous dissemination of the project's products?

Developing handbooks that would actually be put to use by the state and area agencies was the paramount goal of the handbook project. The concern for utilization is reflected in the original design for the project and embodied in the process specifications of AoA's RFP. For the most part, the research team was too busy carrying out the design within the twelve months allotted to give independent thought to "utilization and dissemination problems" as such. The research team felt the original design was a sound one and made no significant midstream modifications.[24]

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[24]Telephone interview with Monica B. Holmes, New York, New York, June 18, 1981. It also should be noted that the CRA effort was funded by a contract, unlike much of AoA-sponsored research. In general, research conducted with grant support allows more room for the researcher to deviate from the original plan than does work performed under contract.

Utilization considerations did, of course, influence decisions about handbook content, organization, and dissemination. For example, to encourage a sense of "ownership" of the materials, the research team chose to keep the focus squarely on the state and area agencies as the audience—even though many of the materials might ultimately prove useful for service providers. AoA and the researchers did not want the effort to appear to duplicate other manuals and resources that were available for a broader audience. Moreover, the principal investigator insisted that AoA disseminate at least two copies of the handbooks to all AAAs, so that one copy could be retained for in-house use and another could be loaned to outside agencies or individuals.

At the end of February 1978, six months after completion of the project, 2,500 copies of each of the handbooks were published by the Office of Human Development Services (OHDS) of DHEW. The handbooks were designed to be inserted into a looseleaf binder, although this format is more expensive than permanent binding. The objectives were not only to faciliate updating or adding to the content, but also to simplify the process of photocopying pages or sections for service providers, etc. It is not known how much, if any, individualized distribution of this type occurred at the state or area levels. AoA has not provided updated pages.

AoA distributed the handbooks in sets of seven as follows:

Recipient	No. of Recipients	No. of Sets Per Recipient	Total No. of Sets
Regional Offices	10	3	30
State Agencies on Aging	56	5	280
Area Agencies on Aging	548	2	1096
National associations concerned with aging	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

A technical assistance memorandum announcing the handbooks and describing their purpose was to accompany each set of the handbooks, but was inadvertently sent two months prior to the final printing of the handbooks. The memorandum presented background information on the reasons for the development of the handbooks, explained their

use, described the intended audience and distribution, and encouraged users to provide feedback on the usefulness of the materials.[25]

Some other advance publicity about the handbooks occurred through such organizations as the National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A). The independent effects of this publicity are unknown. In any case, AoA's Public Inquiries and Information Referral Division received hundreds of requests for the handbooks soon after they were printed. As a result, AoA soon exhausted its supply of handbooks. Recently, however, additional copies were discovered in the Government Printing Office (GPO) warehouse, so the handbooks are back in stock until this limited supply is depleted.[26]

In addition to AoA's active dissemination, the handbooks were also made available through the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), at a cost of $3.50 per volume.

7. What other factors emerged from this inquiry as potentially significant determinants of utilization?

The information obtained from our interviews suggests that there were large differences in the receptivity of the audience for the various handbooks at the state and area agencies, and that these were partly a function of the national emphasis being given each service area. National emphasis can change, moreover, between the time the project is planned and the time of its completion.

In the case of the nursing home handbook, for instance, ombudsman programs were underway in many jurisdictions throughout the country when the CRA project began, usually with Model Project support. Then, when the 1978 Amendments to the Older Americans Act went into effect, a new stimulus was added. The new amendments required each state agency to establish and operate a long-term care ombudsman program and to allocate funds specifically for the program. To carry out the legislative mandate, a struc-

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[25] *Technical Assistance Memorandum* AoA-TA-78-2, December 29, 1977.

[26] Telephone interviews with Joan Shelton, Administration on Aging, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1981 and August 19, 1981.

ture emerged on the federal, state, and often, area levels. Thus, there was and still is a practical need for this kind of information, *and* a multi-level network of individuals ready to serve as distributors and users of the handbook.

A key component of this multi-level network has been AoA's Nursing Home Interests staff—now known as the Advocacy Assistance Unit. Not only was this unit instrumental in disseminating the ombudsman handbook prior to GPO publication, but it is still promoting the handbook. In the past year, the unit:

- directed the members of a task force developing TA materials for ombudsman to review the handbook in the process of developing their set of topics;
- issued a comprehensive program instruction (AoA PI-81-8) to ombudsman in January 1981, which encouraged state and area programs to rely on the CRA handbook, pending the development of the additional TA materials; and
- cited the handbook in the annotated resource appendix of a report on the nationwide ombudsman program.[27]

In the area of residential repair and renovation services, the legislative tide moved in the other direction. Although residential repair and renovation had been a Title III priority service under the 1975 Amendments, this emphasis completely disappeared in the 1978 Amendments. The decision to implement a residential repair program now lies entirely with the state and area agencies; and in many jurisdictions, home repair is simply not a priority. In addition, no funds are set aside and no one is designated at the AoA federal level to take responsibility for residential repair. In effect, nothing remotely approximating the ombudsman network exists for home repair services, at least within the network of federal, state, and local agencies concerned with aging.

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[27]Internal memorandum from Sue Wheaton to Howard White, Administration on Aging, July 31, 1981.

8. Who assumed continuing responsibility for the product upon completion?

In an earlier case study, we noted that there are several ways in which responsibility for an R&D product may be handled upon completion of the development effort.[28] ("Responsibility" includes responding to questions about the product, monitoring the utilization, and determining when modifications are appropriate.) The locus of responsibility may be the research-funding agency, the original developer or research team, a new organization, or no one (i.e., the technology might be left in the public domain).

In the case of the handbooks, responsibility clearly shifted from the CRA team to AoA at the conclusion of the printing process. However, AoA's role since then has been largely delimited to dissemination. In spite of the interest in training and other technical assistance activities within AoA's Office of State and Community Programs, organizational and political realities did not permit such follow-up. AoA's training office would have had to initiate technical assistance and training efforts. But the training office is separate from the program office, and it sets its own priorities. By the time the handbooks were completed, the training priorities already had been established—and did not include handbook follow-up. Changing the priorities at that point would have required the intervention of the Commissioner of AoA. For a variety of reasons, including a decline in enthusiasm for large scale national training efforts at the highest levels of AoA, and also a change of Commissioners, this did not occur.

As noted earlier, AoA's Division of Public Inquiries and Information Referral has responsibility for responding to requests for the handbooks. But the division plays no role in fielding technical questions about the products and/or gathering information about their utilization. During the period that AoA's supply of handbooks was apparently exhausted, moreover, interested persons were referred for assistance to the Service Center for Aging Information (SCAN), an automatic bibliographic system for literature

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[28]Roberta C. Cronin and Ingrid Heinsohn, *The Uses of Research Sponsored by the Administration on Aging, Case Study No. 3: Volunteer Surveys of Nursing Homes*, American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., May 1981. Hereafter cited as *Case Study No. 3.*

related to gerontology. Because SCAN does not distribute printed materials, it in turn referred callers to NTIS, where the handbooks are still for sale.

Neither AoA's program staff nor its research staff have had a continuing role in responding to questions about the handbooks or in monitoring their use. Although the memorandum that preceded the mass-mailing to the aging network asked for users' feedback, there apparently was none. In effect, AoA staff have had no means of knowing whether the handbooks reached their expected audience or whether they were accepted by prospective users.

One follow-on activity did occur, however, under the auspices of the research team. In 1979, a *Handbook of Human Services for Older Persons* was published.[29] It includes edited versions of materials from each of the seven program development handbooks, as well as a chapter on day care services—adapted from the handbook funded by DHEW Region II. It omits materials on the roles of state and area agencies and on specific service provider operations, but retains the sections on the significance of each service, relevant legislation and agencies, service definitions, and alternative models. The book is intended for a general audience, including service providers and students of human services. We did not attempt to examine the ways in which this more recent product has been used, nor did any of the prospective users volunteer information about it. (They did so for other non-CRA manuals and materials, in some instances.) The principal investigator believes, on the basis of her experiences in the field, that the book has reached at least some service providers.[30]

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[29]The full reference is Monica Bychowski Holmes and Douglas Holmes, *Handbook of Human Services for Older Persons*, New York: Human Sciences Press, 1979.

[30]Interview with Monica B. Holmes, June 18, 1981.

C. PROPOSITIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this section, we consider how well the propositions developed in the three earlier case studies apply to our comparison case.[31] In particular, we examine the "within-project" differences between the ombudsman services and the residential repair and renovation handbooks. Both required roughly identical levels of resources for development, were prepared within similar time frames, and were judged to be comparable in quality. Do the three propositions cited earlier contribute to an understanding of why the one handbook was used often, while the other was hardly used at all?

In the case of the second proposition (i.e., advance dissemination and other early interventions) the answer is: Not much. There were some "interventions" designed to boost utilization throughout the life of the handbook project, mainly in the form of opportunities for users to identify needs and to provide feedback on outlines and drafts under development. However, we found no evidence that these interventions differed appreciably from handbook to handbook. The presentations of two of the handbooks at national conferences occurred when the work had been completed.

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[31]The third case study discussed these propositions in greater detail and integrates the lessons of the earlier cases. See Cronin and Heinsohn, *Case Study No. 3*, pp. 35-39.

The remaining two propositions appear to have greater explanatory power. Our evidence suggests that the ombudsman services handbook had some unique advantages over the home repair handbook in regard to both networking (Proposition No. 1) and dissemination (Proposition No. 3), despite a developmental process that was otherwise quite similar.

First, the ombudsman services handbook profited from *two* rounds of active dissemination by AoA rather than one. The first round, prior to publication, was undertaken by the Nursing Home Interests staff and was targeted specifically to those persons at the state and area agencies who were concerned with ombudsman programming. It was designed to prepare the recipients for an upcoming national training conference sponsored by AoA. The second round of dissemination was the general mailing of all of the handbooks to the entire network of regional offices, state units, and area agencies.

Second, CRA staff discussed the ombudsman services handbook at the national training conference shortly after the project ended (the conference occurred in January 1978). Thus, the ombudsman services handbook did not go completely without the follow-up support that had once been considered for all the handbooks. In contrast, there was no follow-up for the residential repair and renovation handbook.

Third, the ombudsman services handbook had the advantage of a pre-existing network of individuals who were already concerned with ombudsman services. Many jurisdictions had specific persons providing or planning for such services. This pre-existing network stretched from the Nursing Home Interests staff, within AoA itself, down to the state and area agency levels in many parts of the country. The growth of this network was further stimulated by the passage of the 1978 Amendments, which mandated resources and some form of ombudsman programming in all states.

In the case of the handbook on home repair, however, we found no evidence that such a network of interested parties existed, at least not within the state and area agencies on aging. In many areas, our interviews suggest that other agencies were taking the lead on whatever was being done on this topic. AoA itself had no one dedicated to the residential repair service priority. The removal of residential repair and renovation from the list of Title III priority services in the 1978 Amendments further served to undermine interest in this topic.

This third difference between the ombudsman and the residential repair cases suggests some elaboration of our thinking about the role of informal social networks that link knowledge producers and users (Proposition No. 1). It appears that a relatively short-term and modest level of networking activity by researchers may be sufficient to generate utilization of a research product, *when there already exists a community of identifiable persons with a strong interest in the topic and a need to do something about it.* The availability within the sponsoring agency of someone, in addition to or in lieu of the research team, to champion the product, also may be an important ingredient of success. The AoA Nursing Home Interests group functioned in this way for the ombudsman services handbook by undertaking additional dissemination, involving the CRA team in the conference of ombudsman program developers, and reminding potential users that the product existed. When the audience for a product is ill-defined, however, or the topic is of uncertain interest, this "receptivity-building" is not enough. Under these circumstances, it seems unlikely that much utilization will occur without investing additional resources.

In our earlier case studies, we drew four general policy implications from the evidence for the above propositions. These were:

- Utilization strategies should *discriminate "research" vs. "development" projects.*
- Utilization should *focus on linking people and organizations, not just products,* and vigorously encourage networking activities throughout the life history of a development project.
- Research-funding agencies must vigorously *support dissemination of materials from development projects* to audiences other than researchers.
- Research-funding agencies should *assign some responsibility for the products* in which they have invested, once the original development efforts is over.

The present inquiry reinforces these policy implications.

The evidence suggests that AoA clearly perceived the Program Development Handbook project as a "development" project from the beginning. It is also clear that AoA expected to assume responsibility for the completed handbooks and did so. Thus, in effect, the comparison case illustrates the practical application of the first and last implications. Where the process broke down was in the follow-through. As we have seen, the ombudsman services handbook did not suffer quite as much as others in this respect, and this may explain in part its greater utilization.

The CRA project also underscores the need for networking and vigorous dissemination. But it suggests two qualifications. First, if there are no "pre-existing" or "natural" networks to serve as audiences for a product (or if they are located outside the target groups defined originally), the sponsoring agency and the research team will have to adjust its utilization and dissemination plans accordingly. More vigorous networking efforts, a longer period of networking, and a reoriented dissemination plan should be considered.

Second, it may be necessary to "re-disseminate" some products periodically (provided that they are not seriously out-of-date). This strategy would recognize two "givens" of the aging network, as well as the broader human services network:

- There is frequent staff turnover, and new staff may sometimes fail to receive resources produced and distributed earlier.
- Agency priorities change, not only in response to changes in federal legislation or policy, but also local economic pressures, personnel changes, and the like. The product that was not needed yesterday may well be of interest tomorrow.

Mass re-dissemination might be indicated only rarely, but a continuum of other approaches is available—from simply reminding the audience of a product's existence to undertaking a second printing.

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED FOR CASE STUDY

Marjory Blood
Maine Committee on Aging
Augusta, Maine

Linda Burnham
Hamilton County Council on Aging
Jasper, Florida

Lou Capaldi
Lehigh County AAA
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Chip Castle
Vermont Office on Aging
Montpelior, Vermont

Carolyn Chandler
Golden Years, Inc.
Moundville, Alabama

Morris Cohen
Administration on Aging
Washington, D.C.

Karen Comeaux
New York State Office for the Aging
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Peter Dys
Lancaster County Office of Aging
York, Pennsylvania

Ken Floyd
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Mary Lou Mooney
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Joseph Morris
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David Moser
Triangle J Council of Governments
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

William Moyle
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Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Jacqueline Nowak*
Pennsylvania Department of Aging
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Alma Pillow
Mid-Cumberland Development District
Nashville, Tennessee

Tom Procopio
Lehigh County AAA
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Eileen Rosenthal
Maryland Office on Aging
Baltimore, Maryland

Patricia Russell
MAC, Inc.
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Shirley Scott
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*Ms. Nowak was affiliatd with the Cumberland County Office on Aging, Carlisle, Pennsylvania during her service on the project's task force.

Anita Shalit
Administration on Aging
Washington, D.C.

Joan Shelton
Administration on Aging
Washington, D.C.

Eugene Solan
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James Steen
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Ed Steinfeld
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Deborah Tyra
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Jack Viggers
Eastern Idaho Special Service
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Lin Wagener
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APPENDIX
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM NON-USERS

Ombudsman Services Handbook

1. The Maine Committee on Aging, which operates the state's ombudsman program under a subcontract, has made no use of the ombudsman services handbook produced by CRA. The head of the program has a copy of the handbook, but draws the training materials for her statewide roster of citizen volunteers from two other manuals. She explained that she received the CRA handbook after she had already established her training package using the other two sources.

2. According to its director, the Triangle J (North Carolina) AAA has made no use of the ombudsman handbook locally, because the primary locus of activities in the nursing home area is at the state level in North Carolina.

3. The Beaver/Butler AAA in Pennsylvania is in the process of developing an ombudsman program in response to state requirements. The ombudsman has received a training manual from the State Office on Aging, but has never heard of the CRA handbook. Funds were just recently allocated for ombudsman programs on the substate level so the ombudsman is interested in obtaining a copy of the handbook as soon as possible. She reported that she "would love to have one for the ombudsman program we need to develop."

4. The nursing home ombudsman for the Los Angeles AAA has never seen the handbook on ombudsman services. She was not in the ombudsman position at the time the handbooks were distributed. However, she believes she would have encountered the handbook while doing background research on ombudsman issues, if there had been a copy at the agency.*

Residential Repair and Renovation Handbook

5. A staff member responsible for residential repair in the Michigan State Office on Aging reported that he is not aware of the handbook on residential repair and renovation. He noted that there are currently many home repair contracts active in the state. Home repair services are typically provided by local agencies under contract with the AAAs.**

6. A housing specialist at the Maryland State Office on Aging does not recall having seen the handbook on residential repair and renovation. She noted that in recent years, the program emphasis has been on congregate housing services rather than home repair.

7. A housing specialist at the Pennsylvania State Department of Aging has a copy of the residential repair and renovation handbook. He may have read through it when he first received it, but could not cite any particular uses. He noted that the major emphasis in the past has been on construction of new housing for the elderly, especially of rental buildings. But he was hopeful that there might be some use for the handbook in the near future with the renewed interest in renovation.

8. A housing specialist in the Vermont State Office on Aging reported that he is not familiar with the handbook on residential repair and renovation. He indicated that the agency primarily works with the AAAs to provide ser-

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*The principal investigator for the handbook project noted that the former director of the AAA served on the project's task force; thus, it seems certain that the agency did have a copy at one time.

**The principal investigator noted that this agency, too, had been part of the development process—it was one of three state units visited by the CRA team. She commented that one might have expected a greater sense of "ownership" from the agency staff.

vices for elderly residents. Unlike some other state agencies, this one does not fund contracts for housing construction, renovation, or repair.

9. In preparing a handbook on housing for AAAs in Maine, a housing specialist in the state office has not come across the residential repair and renovation handbook. She noted that the state agency and the AAAs do not deliver programs through their own resources. The state agency is primarily involved in setting up local corporations that receive federal funds for development. With two exceptions, housing programs are conducted by local CAP agencies whose activities include resource development, weatherization, and rehabilitation. In two areas, the AAAs have the responsibility for housing and doing handiwork and chore services, respectively.

10. A housing and community development specialist at the New York State Office on Aging reported that his office has a copy of the residential repair and renovation handbook. He could not cite any specific uses, although the state office has been quite active in housing issues generally. He noted that this type of handbook is often used simply for background or reference material. He also reported that his predecessor in the position felt the handbook was very comprehensive and well done.

11. The assistant director of the Mid-Cumberland (Tennessee) AAA, the Mid-Cumberland AAA Development District, knew of no local utilization of the residential repair and renovation handbook. She reported that the agency has no person assigned to that service area and no funding allocated for it.

12. MAC, Inc., one of Maryland's AAAs, provides no direct services for residential repair; these are provided by a subgrantee, Shore-up Asociates. MAC's planner was unaware of any use of the home repair handbook, although it is in the agency's resource library and the library is open to subgrantees, students, and others. Shore-up's R&D staff person was unfamiliar with the handbook, but asked: "Where can I get a copy?"